

Scripting Videos for Online Teaching



A great script won't just make your lecture memorable, it will save you hours of production time.

1 Four Check Points

CHECK POINT 1: WRITE A KILLER OPENING

Because the first 10 seconds are key to making an impression, your opening sentence needs to hook your audience. Good examples are:



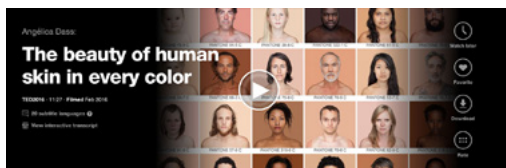
- [Contextualisation](#): how this topic is immediately relevant to the lives of your audience



- [A thought-provoking question or statement](#)



- [A phenomenon](#)



- [Storytelling](#)

While you can start by introducing yourself and your research (establishing your authority), this kind of opening is over-used and often not very interesting.

CHECK POINT 2: EXPLAIN WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE AUDIENCE

A good script is like a good sales pitch – explain within the 1st 2 paragraphs why this topic will be important for the listener. However, avoid phrases like “this will be interesting for you because...” – your words should explain why it will be interesting rather than merely telling them that it will be.

CHECK POINT 3: KEEP IT SIMPLE

While the content itself might be complex, keep both the structure and the language as simple as possible. Don't overload your audience with too many ideas at once or with too much jargon.

CHECK POINT 4: CALL TO ACTION

Your closure should answer “and now what?” How can audiences apply this knowledge to their context or check their knowledge? Is there a discussion?

2 Key Principles of Script Writing

IT IS SPOKEN:

- Be natural
- Use words that are in your audience's vocabulary
- NB. Conversational writing is natural, not invented
- It's okay to use contractions: can't, he's, don't, there's, etc.
- Explain jargon clearly

IMMEDIACY:

- Material online should appear to refer to something happening NOW so use present tense (do, behave, calculate, etc.) or present perfect tense (are doing, are behaving, are calculating, etc.) rather than past tense.

PERSON TO PERSON:

- Establish an intimacy with the audience, even though you know many others are listening too.
- Imagine your audience is only 1 person – your favourite student (of an appropriate level) or friend, and talk only to them.
- Anticipate their questions and ensure that your script answers them.
- Give the information straight, but try to entertain whenever possible
- Don't be too dull and formal

TIPS FOR WRITING:

- Aim for 140 words per minute.
- If you are using a teleprompter, note in the script where you want the presenter to be visible [presenter] versus the powerpoint [full screen] and which slide you are on [slide 17].
- Add notes in the script that help you present, such as [smile] or [pause].

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